Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 10 line 15 with the following amended paragraph:

--Further, as best shown in Figures 1 through 5 the separable housing portions 14 and 16 ~~are~~ have substantially equivalent dimensions and configurations, so as to facilitate the formation of an extremely close, tight fitting, ~~tight seal~~ about the peripheral seam 18 generally defined by the corresponding peripheries of the separable portions. As such, there is virtually no spacing along the length of the peripheral seam 18 which would allow unauthorized personnel to pass a tool or instrument there between in an effort to separate the housing portions 14 and 16. Also, as described in greater detail hereinafter, an interior housing section 17 is provided to house and retain the various operative components of the tag assembly 10. Moreover, the interior housing section 17 is also cooperatively structured with the separable housing portions 14 and 16 by having a substantially convex or like exterior curved surface configuration, as shown in Figure 3. Such a convex configuration further prohibits or significantly restricts the passage of an instrument or tool beyond the peripheral seam 18.

Any such attempts would result in the penetrating end of such an instrument to immediately abut against the convex exterior surface of the housing section 17 as it rises or extends upwardly or outwardly beyond the peripheral seam 18.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 11 line 9 with the following amended paragraph:

--With primary reference to Figures 6 and 7, a preferred embodiment of the connector member 20 may be more specifically defined by an elongated pin or like structure formed of stainless steel or other hard, durable material. Further, the connector pin includes an enlarged head 22 embedded or otherwise fixedly and/or permanently secured within an interior end portion 24 of one of the separable portions, as at 14. The outer or distal end 26 of the connector member may or may not be sharpened or pointed and is disposed and structured to penetrate the merchandise. When so engaged by the connector member 20, the merchandise is maintained in the aforementioned operative position, clamped between ~~the~~ and lockingly secured by separable portions 14 and 16.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 11 line 21 with the following amended paragraph:

--The enlarged, outwardly extended or expanded configuration of the head 22 is such as to make it extremely difficult if not impossible to pass through the merchandise which has been penetrated by the shaft 23 of the connector pin 20. Accordingly, in the unlikely event that an unauthorized person were able to break through the outer surface of the ~~housing~~ separable portion 14 and some how dislodge the connector 20 therefrom, it would be impossible or extremely difficult to accomplish passage of the enlarged head 22 through the merchandise being penetrated by the relatively thin shaft 23. As set forth hereinafter, the shaft 23 will be lockingly engaged or gripped by the locking assembly generally indicated as 30. Therefore, in order to remove the merchandise from the connector 20, an unauthorized person would have to force the enlarged head 22 through the merchandise causing significant damage and thereby rendering the merchandise useless.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 12 line 11 with

the following amended paragraph:

--Other structural components of the security tag assembly 10 of the present invention include an interior housing section 17 mounted on within the housing 12 as shown in Figures 3, 5 and 6. The interior housing section 17 is cooperatively disposed, configured and structured with one of the separable portions, such as at 16, to movably and operably contain a locking assembly generally indicated as 30. The locking assembly 30 is movably mounted within a first sleeve portion 32 secured to the interior housing section 17. Similarly, when assembled, the various components of the locking assembly 30 are cooperatively and movably positioned relative to one another within a second sleeve structure 34 secured to the separable housing portion 16. Both the sleeve 32 and the sleeve 34 comprise hollow interiors and at least one open end 33 and 35 respectively. In addition, the interior housing section 17 includes a central bore or opening 19 disposed to receive the passage of the connector member 20 therethrough as it is disposed in locking but removable engagement with the locking ~~engagement~~ assembly 30.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 14 line 25 with

the following amended paragraph:

--Another features of a preferred embodiment of the present invention comprises a shield assembly generally indicated as 42. The shield assembly 42 is formed of a heat and/or flame resistant material such as a metallic material. Further, the shield assembly 42 includes what may be considered a "cup-like" configuration comprising a hollow interior and at least one open end 44. Further, an outwardly extending peripheral rim 46 surrounds the open end 44. The shield assembly 42 is disposed within the interior of the sleeve 34 mounted on or integrally secured to the separable ~~housing~~ portion 16. Passage of the shield assembly 42 through the open end 35 of the sleeve 34 is readily accomplished to the extent that the peripheral rim 46 rests on or about the perimeter of the open end 35 and facilitates a frictional engaging relation between the shield assembly 42 and the interior of the sleeve 34.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 16 line 20 with the following amended paragraph:

--In at least one preferred embodiment of the present invention the aforementioned external force is supplied in the

form of a magnetic force schematically represented and indicated as 50. The housing 12, when disposed and locked in its operative position, as generally shown in Figure 1, can be disposed within the magnetic field 50 of a magnet assembly generally indicated as ~~52~~ 51. Exposure to the magnetic field 50 will serve to move the locking member 36 at ~~last~~ least partially outward from the retainer member 38 and towards and against the biasing force of the biasing spring 40. Once the locking member is so positioned, the balls 37 are allowed to move outwardly from the interior of the locking member 36, enabling the release of the shaft of the connector member 20 therefrom. The separable portions 14 and 16 may be disconnected and removed out of the aforementioned operative position.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 17 line 15 with the following amended paragraph:

--With primary reference to Figures 8 through 10, the security tag assembly 10 of the present invention further comprises an indicator assembly including at least one but preferably a plurality of indicator members 53, 54 and 55. These indicator members are mounted on or within a mounting

retainer 56 secured to an interior and/or underside of the interior housing section 17 in engaging and/or retaining relation thereto. The indicator members 53, 54 and 55 may have common structural and operative features or may differ. By way of example, one or more of the indicator members 53, 54, and 55 may include an ink or staining agent which is released such as through openings or apertures 59 formed in an appropriate location on the interior housing section 17. Alternatively, an undersurface of the retainer 56 as at 56' as represented in Figures 8 and 9 may include openings for the exposure of the one or more indicator members 53, 54 and 55. Forced and unauthorized separation of the separable portions 14 and 16 of the housing will serve to rupture the ink or staining agent capsules thereby disbursing the ink, etc. onto the merchandise and rendering the merchandise useless.—

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 18 line 9 with the following amended paragraph:

--Another preferred embodiment of the indicator assembly is depicted in Figure 9A. As shown therein, at least one of a plurality of indicators may include an indicator member 57

comprising an electronic signaling device. The electronic signaling device 57 is structured to activate an associated alarm system located at a monitoring station typically positioned at the exits of a retail establishment or other area being monitored. The electronic signaling device 57 may be mounted beneath the surface 56' and substantially within the space between the retainer 56 and the ~~interior housing section 17~~ separable portion 16. Accordingly, the embodiment of Figure 9A comprises the indicator assembly including one or more indicator members 53 and 54 in the form of staining agent capsules in combination with the indicator member in the form of the electronic signaling device 57.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 18 line 23 with the following amended paragraph:

--Further, the space within the interior housing section 17 is sufficient to mount a plurality of additional and different types of signaling devices including, but not limited to, the electronic signaling device 57. It is further emphasized that the tag assembly 10 of the present invention is structured and dimensioned to accommodate many different types of indicators

including a variety of different electronic signaling or warning devices. All of these devices may be mounted within the space between the retainer 56 and the ~~inner surface~~ interior of the interior housing section 17, without modifying the dimension, configuration or overall structure of the housing 12 or the other operative components of the tag assembly 10.--